

Message Text

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11

ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1823

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMILTON 207

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, MILI, PINT, BD

SUBJ: LABOR TROUBLE NAS BERMUDA

REF: HAMILTON 199

1. BIU MEETING CALLED BY SIMMONS AT HOLIDAY INN HELD AS SCHEDULED (PARA 2 REFTEL). HOWEVER, FIRST VOTE (PROCEDURAL ISSUE OF HOW TO VOTE ON STRIKE QUESTION) WAS 89 FOR SECRET BALLOT, 11 FOR OPEN. MANY OF 330 WORKERS WHO ATTENDED MEETING WALKED OUT REFUSING TO VOTE ON ANY ISSUE. BECAUSE OF ALMOST CERTAIN DEFEAT

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BY SECRET BALLOT ON STRIKE ACTION SIMMONS HAS POSTPONED STRIKE ACTION VOTE TO AUG. 7.

2. USING LOCAL DAILY ROYAL GAZETTE PER USUAL FOR PUBLIC AIRING BIU COMPLAINTS SIMMONS ISSUED STATEMENT REPORTED GAZETTE JULY 30. PARTS OF STATEMENT FOLLOW: IF KW CONTINUES TO (A) REFUSE RECOGNIZE BIU (B) REFUSE TO BRING THE LOCAL BERMUDIAN WORKERS
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BENEFITS IN LINE WITH LOCAL PRACTICES (PARA 5 REFTEL)

(C) REFUSE TO HIRE ALL LOCAL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WHERE PRACTICAL (D) REFUSE TO COMPLY WITH LOCAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS (E) REFUSE TO REMOVE ALL FOREIGN WORKERS PRESENTLY LIVING AT HOLIDAY INN AT REDUCED RATES (PARA 4 REFTEL) THEN GOB MUST IN INTERESTS OF WORKERS STEP IN AND ASK USG TO WITHDRAW ITS CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FROM EXPLOITERS SUCH AS KW. FAILING GOB INTERVENTION THEN BIU WILL APPEAL TO ALL WORKERS BERMUDA TO STAGE PROTEST ACTION AGAINST ALL AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR PERMITTING AND ENCOURAGING KW TO REMAIN AT THE BASE UNDER THESE CONDITIONS.

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3. AT GOB PREMIER SIR EDWARD RICHARDS REQUEST CONGEN CALLED ON HIM AM JULY 30 TO REVIEW PRESENT KW-BIU SITUATION. PREMIER GAVE FULL REPORT OF HIS MEETING WITH SIMMONS WHICH WAS AT SIMMONS REQUEST ON JULY 26. RICHARDS SAID SIMMONS AGAIN PRESSED FOR GOB INTERVENTION WHICH PREMIER REFUSED TO CONSIDER STATING THE MATTER WAS A LABOR DISPUTE BETWEEN KW AND BIU. RICHARDS SUGGESTED THAT SIMMONS SIGN CLAUSE OR CLAUSES WHICH WOULD BIND UNION IN SIMILAR MANNER AS THOSE CLAUSES NOW OPERATIVE ON KW IN NAVY CONTRACT. IF SIMMONS WOULD AGREE THOSE CLAUSES WHICH WOULD BE "NO STRIKE" IN NATURE HE, RICHARDS, WOULD APPROACH U.S. CONGEN TO SEE IF DISPUTE COULD BE RESOLVED. SIMMONS IGNORED, BUT DID NOT REFUSE, OFFER. PREMIER ALSO SUGGESTED KW SET UP IN TOWN OFFICE WHERE LABOR COULD TALK WITH KW RE EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES. (KW NOW ON BASE ONLY AND WORKERS DO NOT HAVE EASY ACCESS KW EMPLOYMENT OFFICER. DISCUSSION OF IN TOWN OFFICE WAS ALREADY UNDERWAY AND KW WILL PROBABLY RESORT TO GOB EMPLOYMENT OFFICE AS AGENCY FROM WHICH KW WILL HIRE.

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WE AGREED KEEP EACH OTHER INFORMED OF ANY FURTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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DEVELOPMENTS.

4. COMMENT: SIMMONS APPROACHED PREMIER AND NOT MIN. OF LABOUR WOOLRIDGE, PROBABLY BECAUSE WOOLRIDGE NOT SYMPATHETIC (ACTUALLY THEY HAVE GREAT DEAL MUTUAL DISRESPECT FOR EACH OTHER) SIMMONS PLEAS AND IN HIS WORDS HE TOLD SIMMONS BUZZ OFF. IF SIMMONS GETS STRIKE VOTE HOLIDAY INN AUG. 7 HE WILL PROBABLY

ISSUE ORDERS BLACK LIST ALL GOODS, SUPPLIES HOLIDAY INN AND KW AT DOCKS. APPARENTLY HE BELIEVES HIS INFLUENCE STEVEDORES IS STRONG. SINCE HE MAKING MORE STRIDENT STATEMENTS AND DEMANDS EACH PUBLIC UTTERANCE HE MAY BLACK LIST HOLIDAY INN KW ITEMS AT DOCKS PREVENTING OFF LOADING STRIKE VOTE OR NO.

5. GOB IN IDEAL POSITION AS KW AND NAVY (USG) CARRYING THE MAIL AND GOB CAN SIT SIDELINES WATCH SIMMONS VS KW. GOB CONCERN RE SIMMONS POLITICAL AMBITIONS BEST SUMMED UP BY PREMIER WHEN COMPARING SIMMONS AND EUGENE

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BLAKENEY (BIU VP). PREMIER SAID EUGENE IS REAL LABOR MAN AND INTERESTED ONLY IN IMPROVING LOT OF LABOR AND DEFENDING IT AND SIMMONS USING MOVEMENT ONLY TO FURTHER OWN POLITICAL AMBITIONS.

6. ALL LABOR UNION ACTION CEASED DURING LONG 4 DAY FESTIVE WEEKEND WHICH IS BERMUDA ANNUAL CRICKET, SOMMERS DAY CELEBRATION. SIMMONS NOW HAS FOUR DAYS TO GALVANIZE, COERCE, PRESSURE OR PERSUADE THE HOLIDAY INN UNION MEMBERS TO SUPPORT A STRIKE VOTE ON AUG. 7.

7. EDITORIAL IN AUG. 4 ROYAL GAZETTE ECHOES "NEUTRAL" GOB PUBLIC STANCE, SUGGESTING "THERE IS RIGHT ON BOTH SIDES". KW HAS RIGHT OF FACT: BIU HAS THAT OF PRINCIPLE". EDITORIAL DISMISSES STRIKE THREAT AGAINST US BASES AS "NOT ALL THAT SERIOUS, AS...RELATIVELY LITTLE LOCAL LABOR IS INVOLVED", BUT NOTES THAT POSSIBLE HOLIDAY INN STRIKE "COULD HAVE SERIOUS CONFIDENTIAL

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REPERCUSSIONS" AND "MIGHT ESCALATE TO OTHER HOTELS". EDITORIAL DEPLORES THAT STRIKE THREAT COULD ANATAGONIZE

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AND IRRITATE "REASONABLE MEN WHO ARE PREPARED TO SEE IF THERE IS WAY OUT OF PROBLEM", STATES THAT BIU'S "JUSTIFIABLE CLAIM" CAN "COMMAND RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION" WITHOUT RESORTING TO THREATS.

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